Guest Editorial

Gun Control Misses the Target

Submitted By Scott McPherson

In the aftermath of the Washington-area sniper killings, editorial pages and ambitious politicians alike are clamoring for more gun-control laws. This is hardly surprising, given that the professed connection between guns and crime is practically an article of faith.

But what if guns really have nothing to do with violent crime? What if even the most restrictive gun-control measures don't work, or even make things worse? The facts suggest that may be closer to the mark.

Gun-control proponents have long pointed to countries such as England as evidence for their claims. Look across the Atlantic, they say. England doesn't have the crime and violence that the United States has. Surely this must be related to the low availability of firearms. America should learn from its more civilized cousins.

However, not only does that assertion now appear to be a misfire, but it purposely avoids comparisons that show the "guns cause crime" fallacy for what it is. It also keeps Americans from pursuing real solutions to the crime problem. This mixture certainly provides firepower for the gun-control agenda, but it will continue to make for terrible public policy.

Let us look at England then. Since the British government banned virtually all private gun ownership in 1997, crime has skyrocketed. Violent crime has more than doubled in the last five years. England's overall crime rate actually leads Western nations — including the United States.

Something else gun-control zealots conveniently omit from their discussion of crime and violence is Switzerland. In that peaceful little mountain country the average household contains three guns, comparable to the situation in Texas. From the age of 20, Swiss males are required to keep an assault rifle for purposes of national defense. The Swiss government actually sells surplus military rifles to the citizenry, and a permit to carry a concealed handgun is easily obtained. Despite that nation's "love affair" with firearms, Switzerland enjoys the lowest crime rate in Europe.

If guns cause crime, someone forgot to tell the Swiss. If gun control is the answer to violence, someone forgot to tell the English.

Back on this side of the pond, towns like Kennesaw, Georgia, put gun-control arguments to the test, and again they are shown to be of a very low caliber. For the past 20 years, residents of this Atlanta suburb have been required by law to keep a gun in their home. The result is two decades of steadily falling crime rates, over and above national and state trends.

The research of award-winning criminologist Gary Kleck suggests that as many as 2.5 million times per year — about 5,000 times per day — Americans use guns to defend themselves. In fact, private citizens kill more felons than the police. Yale Law School senior research scholar John Lott showed in his book, More Guns, Less Crime, that states allowing their citizens to carry concealed handguns have lower rates of murder, rape, and assault.

The truth is, armed citizens discourage crime, and disarmed people are easy prey for violent thugs. Instead of promoting the same failed paradigm of the last 30 years, perhaps it would be wiser for gun-control advocates to investigate other reasons for America's crime "epidemic." A likely candidate is our highly destructive war on drugs, which breeds a large and vicious criminal class, misdirects police resources, and fills prisons with nonviolent drug users while returning violent criminals to the streets.

If we have learned anything from both our own experiences and events overseas, it is that the only effect guns have on crime is to make people worse off when they aren't around. Gun control may provide catchy sound bites at election time, but it misses the target by a long shot.

No pot shots, just thanks from someone grateful for holiday aid

Dear Editor,

I would like to get the facts straight as I am the mother of the 13 year-old boy who received 1 tee shirt, 2 pairs of mens dress socks, and 1 small Lego toy. They provided a mobile and a 0-3 month sleeper for my grandson who was 8 months old at the time. We also received gift wrap and a food box.

Whether these items were purchased or donated I could not say. The food box was the most useful and appreciated.

We were referred to the X-High Riders by Mrs. Harmston as I live in Uintah County. I have lived here in the Basin my whole life. I am a widow with two children and two grandchildren at home. There are no pot shots being taken as referred in earlier letters to the editor. Yes, we received these gifts.

I contacted Mrs. Harmston at home and showed her what my son had received and picked up at the Roosevelt City Building as I was heart broken as he had so many basic needs at the time. Mrs. Harmston told me she would do what she could.

She then had me fill out her standard application. It asked basic questions; shoe size, shirt and pant size, socks or any special needs.

In years past my son has participated in local programs as winter time is a real struggle.

Some years ago he participated with the shop with a cop, and to this day has a picture of the wonderful officer who took him shopping. Even after all this time this event remains "special" to him. I would like to extend a grateful thank you as the children were treated so special. Great work guys.

Anyway, I was later contacted by Mrs. Harmston who stated she wanted to drop by. She brought my son socks, new shoes, a coat and a very nice tied quilt as she knows the interview went quite well, but was told through the grapevine that one of the male bosses, I would have been working for, felt threatened by my education.

Why are these people so closed minded? When right in front of them is a person that wants to work, to learn, not to take your job. I want my own job, to try to make a difference, to work toward something positive. I know there are a lot of women out there who also feel the frustration that I feel and I hope they won't give up. I know I will not!

Jackie P. Stevenson

Gender discrimination encountered in local job market

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter to the Editor because I feel there is a major problem in the Duchesne County area and it is based on discrimination, not race but gender, education, and age.

I am a woman in my early forties with a college degree. I am originally from another city, but have been in the Basin area long enough to know that there is a male mentality in this area that dates back to the 1800s.

I have been looking for work for about two months. My resume is the only thing that has been working, it has taken me to many an interview. On one interview I went to the "County Seed" for an entry level position for the State of Utah. A man who will remain anonymous asked me if I would have trouble taking direction from someone younger than myself! Off to another interview, this one also an entry level position. I felt

Bereaved family praises volunteer efforts to find missing son.

Dear Editor,

Dear Sheriff Stansfield, Duchesne Co. Sheriffs Department, fire department, paramedics, canine unit, Highway Patrol, and all volunteers and divers who searched for our son:

There simply aren't adequate words to express the gratitude we feel for each one of you good people who helped us locate our son, Kenny Sharp. Our hearts were so touched by the commitment, determination and most of all, compassion that each of you showed us during this most difficult time in our lives.

This was definitely one of the blackest moments that we have ever experienced, but we were able to get through it, in part, because of your caring, concern, and dedication. You are all truly some of God's finest.

We can't begin to tell you how much it meant to have you keep us informed and assure us that you wouldn't stop until he was found. And the divers...what incredible people you all are. To give freely of your time and put yourselves in the kind of danger that you did, all to help us find our son's body and bring us the peace and closure that we so desperately needed.

I said on several occasions that it had to be terrifying, even though you are fully trained to do this. You have our eternal admiration and gratitude.

Our thanks to your sweet dogs and their trainers who worked so hard and did their job so well. Thank you to all of the people in the other departments who provided support in every aspect of this recovery and put in many long hours away from their families.

Sheriff Stansfield, you will always have a special place in our hearts. Your compassion and comfort were well above and beyond the call of duty. You touched both of our hearts deeply. Duchesne County is very fortunate to have you there.

Once again, our thanks and love to all of the wonderful people of Duchesne County and may God bless each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Boyd and Mara Sharp and family

trailers are cold. She also provided a baby blanket for my grandson, diapers, warm sleepers, one outfit, clothing, and a baby toy as well.

The Christmas Spirit Connection prioritized my family's needs plus tried to provide a toy as well. Granted their first concern is to cover the basics. However, the gifts I received from the Spirit Connection were wonderful and just what he needed. We fight for his quilt all the time.

As for me, I was very grateful for the food box from the X-High Riders and with the basic down to earth gifts provided by the Christmas Spirit Connection. I felt very grateful at Christmas.

We had a nice Christmas dinner and my son and grandson had warm clothes. Who could ask for anything more. We felt blessed.

I guess I was raised too practical to ever ask someone for something extravagant as a bike, even though he would love one. I am more concerned that his basic needs are met.

You all deserve hugs and kisses for all you do and helped provide. I can't help ask myself what good is a bike if a child has no coat or shoes? I only know if it is picking a toy over a necessity such as shoes, the shoes will win every time.

Call me practical, not ungrateful nor a liar.

Merry Christmas to all

Sandra L.P. Johnson

Uintah mixed blood Indians entitled to enforce treaty rights

Dear Editor,

The Plaintiffs Uintah Mix-Blood Indian's Federal Court Action. Complaint or action against the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, et al., to Enforce Trust Responsibilities over Uintah Valley 1861-1864 Indian Reservation, in Violation of Conferred Congressional Acts; and, the Allotment Act; and this has all been done through the Ute Partition Act of Congress.

Right to Uintah Valley 1861-1864 Indian Reservation. The Uintah Valley treaty still has force and effect as federal statutes. Violation of the Uintah Valley treaty, is to violate federal law. The Uintah mix-blood Indians are entitled to enforce Uintah Valley and Ouray treaty rights.

If federal officials are in violation of this right, lawsuits can be filed in federal court to halt this violation. Treaty rights can be raised as defense in federal courts. Criminal prosecution, is barred by treaty, which protects activity for which all Uintah mix-blood Indians are being prosecuted for, and charges must be dismissed.

If federal officials arrests Uintah mix-blood Indians for hunting or fishing out of season, that person is not guilty of charges, but was exercising treaty rights at the time in question.

A lawsuit to protect treaty rights within Uintah Valley Reservation treaties, belong not just to Ute Tribe; but they belong to every Uintah mix-blood Indian within the reservation boundaries.

Perhaps treaties seem unfair to non-Indians under today's standards, just as many of United States treaties seemed unfair to Uintah mix-blood Indians at the time they were written. But regardless of how they seemed then, or seem now, United States citizens of this country have the legal, moral, and ethical duty to enforce the United States' treaties.

Uintah mix-blood Indians have paid dearly for this U.S. treaty rights, and federal government should keep its end of the bargain.

As the court's observed in enforcing the century-old treaty, the mere passage of time has not eroded, and cannot erode, the rights guaranteed by solem treaties that both sides pledged to honor and to uphold.

Collen Gardner, AUN, President

Edson Gardner, AUN, Vice President

Letters

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Uintah Basin Standard welcomes and encourages opinions from readers in the form of letters to the editor. Letters may be utilized to express opinions or comments, to highlight outstanding service of an individual or organization, or any other worthwhile purpose. Letters may not be used to replace Cards of Thanks, or to list sponsors, participants or contributors to a particular event or purpose. LETTERS MUST CONTAIN 400 WORDS OR LESS. *BE TYPED OR WRITTEN LEGIBLY, SIGNED, AND INCLUDE NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE AUTHOR. Letters will be published unless they contain libelous or defamatory statements. We reserve the right to edit letters and to withhold a name by request if the nature of the letter is positive. Letters may be submitted to the Standard office at 268 S. 200 E., Roosevelt, Utah, 84066 by the published deadline (normally Thursdays at 5:00 p.m.) All letters become property of the Uintah Basin Standard.*

Forgotten Patient Christmas Project

Dear Editor,

Now that Thanksgiving is here and gone, it's time to recruit volunteers to help with our Forgotten Patient Christmas Project. Our project has been providing Christmas for Utah's mentally ill for over 36 years. Much of the success of this project is due to the willingness of newspapers to help us get the word out to the community that their help is needed.

Christmas is a time to be joyful and a time to be with family

SEE LETTERS on page 3

make their holidays...
give 'em a
jingle
TWO MONTHS
FREE
ACCESS
LIMITED TIME OFFER
kyocera 1135
FREE
after instant rebate
simplicity
calling plans
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